



# St. Damian's Primary School

## Code of Conduct (Parents/Guardians & Volunteers) Policy

### 1. Purpose

At St Damian's Primary School we aim to provide an open, welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all. We believe that parents are valuable contributors and participants in the life of our School and Parish. Our School Vision Statement outlines our core belief as a Catholic School.

### 2. Vision Statement

Alive in the Spirit, we journey together, engaging with the present, shaping the future.

2011

### 3. Scope

This Code applies to all adults, including parents, guardians, all visitors, and any other adult involved in activities or communication related to St Damian's Primary School.

### 4. Background and Legislation

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Working with Children Act (2005)
- Children, Youth and Families Act (2005)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2015)
- Disability Discrimination Act (2014)
- Equal Opportunity Act (2010)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act (2006)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004)
- Australian Educational Act (2013)
- Sex Discrimination Act (1984)
- Workplace Relations Act (1996)
- St Damian's Privacy Policy (2016)

As an educational facility St Damian's school "...is operated in a way which ensures the safety of the children being cared and educated and that their developmental needs are met." *Children's Services Act 1996 sec 18 (4), Education Act.*

*The Catholic Education Commission Of Victoria Ltd (CECV) holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children, and young people are our central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education. . This commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel. ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).*

As an employer St Damian's school has an obligation to ensure a safe and discrimination free working environment for staff in accordance with relevant legislation.

St Damian's School needs to ensure all parents/guardians, volunteers, staff, students and any other persons involved in the school, adhere to clear guidelines regarding appropriate interaction and communication with one another and with students and staff at the school.

St Damian's School is responsible for:

- Ensuring all parents/guardians, staff, volunteers, students and visitors are provided with a copy of this policy upon arrival, employment and enrolment.
- Maintaining currency and relevancy of the Code of Conduct Policy
- Implementing the standards of conduct as set out in this policy as Appendix 1.

The Staff are responsible for:

- Respecting the individual needs, cultural practices and beliefs of families in all interactions, both verbal and non-verbal.
- Working with colleagues, the Board, representatives of the P&F, class representatives and parents/guardians to provide an environment that encourages positive interactions and support constructive feedback.

#### **5. Related Documents**

The Code of Conduct is to be read with and operates in conjunction with St Damian's Schools Policies and Conditions of Enrolment.

#### **6. Authorisation**

This policy was ratified by the St Damian's Education Board committee at the meeting on 16.08.16

#### **7. Review Date**

This policy shall be reviewed periodically as required.

## Expectations of Parents (Standards of Conduct)

### General principles that always apply

- (a) **Communication** Parents will use courteous and acceptable written and spoken language in all communications with students, staff and other parents and members of the school community.
- (b) **Ethical Conduct** Parents will act in line with the school's values and expectations having in mind the best interests of all in the community; students, their families and staff members. They will not engage in malicious behaviour or gossip that is unfair or untruthful.
- (c) **Respect** We value our diverse community and respect the rights, religious beliefs and practices of individuals and their families. We respect points of view that are different from our own and all members of our community must refrain from actions and behaviour that constitutes harassment, discrimination or vilification.
- (d) **Safety** Comply with all relevant policies and procedures of the school. All vehicles entering the school must comply with the traffic signs and parking regulations. This information is available on the school website or in the school office. Be aware of the emergency evacuation procedures.
- (e) **Confidentiality** Always maintain confidentiality in discussions and correspondence. Be mindful of the potential impact of breaching confidentiality of students, families and staff. This is particularly important in the instance when parents engage with students as part of classroom helpers program. There is a requirement of such volunteers to maintain confidentiality at all times and to never speak of a child, their behaviour or progress, to anyone in the community, including the child's parents. All matters should be referred to the class teacher who will act as needed by the individual situations.

### When visiting school

- (a) The Victorian Schools Reference Guide requires all visitors to the school during school hours to sign a visitors' register located at the school office, so that their presence in the school is recorded in the event of an emergency.
- (b) Parents will comply with all safety and emergency procedures in place at our school and in the event of an emergency while they are on school grounds they will follow the instructions given by any member of school staff.
- (c) When attending any kind of school assembly or public meeting parents will listen respectfully, in the same manner required of students and staff, and will

refrain from creating any noise or disturbance during performances or speeches by students, staff or visitors.

- (d) Parents will treat all other visitors to our school with courtesy and respect.
- (e) A parent may not interrupt or distract a teacher while classroom instruction or learning activities are underway.
- (f) A parent may not discipline a child who is not theirs or speak to a child who is not theirs about their behaviour. This is the role of teaching staff. Being approached by an adult they do not know can be distressing for children. Parents should therefore raise any behavioural, bullying or peer group issues with a member of the teaching staff and it is the teacher's responsibility to deal with these issues.
- (g) When visiting a classroom parents accept the authority of the teacher or teachers. Teachers value parental involvement and assistance, but they may ask a parent to leave a classroom or class activity for any reason, but not limited to
  - (i) parental assistance not being required at the time;
  - (ii) parental presence in the classroom or at the activity is disturbing or distracting to any student or teacher.

### **When communicating with school staff**

- (a) All school staff are entitled to a safe and happy work environment. This is in the best interests of our children as well as staff themselves.
- (b) The priority for school staff is the welfare and education of all children in the school. School staff are therefore not required to respond to emails and telephone calls instantaneously. Normal service standards suggest that an acceptable response time for emails is 2 working days. Responses are not expected outside normal working hours or during school holidays unless it is an emergency.
- (c) The time available for parents to meet with staff is limited and must be scheduled at a time that does not disrupt the classroom. Parents should be mindful of the teacher's time, communicate the reason for the meeting and allow the teacher time to prepare. In the case of a genuine emergency parents should contact the office to organise a suitable meeting time.

### **8. When communicating with the School Education Board**

When referring matters to the Board parents should be aware that the board's main function is an advisory role and offers assistance with the following:

Formulation and/or endorsement of internal School Policies and the

development, monitoring,  
Evaluation and review of these  
School's financial management and operation  
Ongoing development and maintenance of school facilities, equipment,  
buildings and environment  
Enrolment process when required  
Selection of a principal when such an appointment is being made and in  
accordance with Catholic Education Office guidelines  
Initiatives of parents, groups and working committees  
Development of school/community relationships and home/school  
interaction  
Integration of staff, parents and children new to the school  
Development of strategies for the local promotion of Catholic Education  
*(School Education Board Guidelines 2016)*

- (a) School Education Board members welcome feedback from parents. But school board members are volunteers and engaged in their own work and activities during business hours. When parents communicate with school board members they should therefore establish that it is a convenient time, or ask to speak at a convenient time.
- (b) Correspondence to the school board may be forwarded to the Education Board email address ([education-board@sdbundoora.catholic.edu.au](mailto:education-board@sdbundoora.catholic.edu.au)) or in writing via the School Office. The matter will be considered for discussion at the School Board meeting. If discussed at the Education Board meeting a written response will be sent.

### **When communicating with other parents**

- (a) Parents will respect the privacy of other parents' email addresses and will not send unsolicited emails or "spam" to school parents or forward unsolicited emails or spam that they receive to other parents. Parents will not forward other parents' email addresses without their permission. Parents provide their email address to the school in order to receive communications from the school about school related matters and their child. The school will not give out the email address of parents to other parents without permission. Parents give their email addresses to class representatives in order to receive communications about class activities, get together for their child's class, and to establish rosters for classroom help, fundraising activities and so on. Class representatives will not pass on parent email addresses to other parents without permission.
- (b) Parents who act as class representatives, and members of the P&F are valued volunteers who play a critical role in our community and commit a great deal of time for the benefit of all. Apart from the general principles that always apply, parents should be particularly sensitive about the manner in which they

provide feedback and ask questions of hardworking volunteers.

### **When making a complaint**

Parents have the right to raise issues and concerns related to the education of their child or school matters. Parents should ensure that they raise their issues and concerns with the right person and follow the correct communication channels. When making a complaint parents should refer to the School Complaints Policy, which is available on the School Website.

Parents must follow the procedures outlined in the School Complaints Policy. It is a breach of this Parent Code of Conduct to make a complaint in a way that is not consistent with the School Complaints Policy, especially when the complaint is about a student, a teacher, another parent or another member of school staff.

### **Consequences of a Breach of Parent Code of Conduct**

Any parent, member of school staff or student may notify the Principal or Deputy Principal of a possible breach of the Parent Code of Conduct. The Principal or Deputy Principal will investigate the complaint and if satisfied that a breach has occurred:

- (a) provide in writing a first and final warning that a breach of the Code of Conduct has occurred and that a further breach will not be tolerated;
- (b) determine whether a breach may be rectified by the parent making a private or public apology, depending on the circumstances, to an individual or group of individuals;
- (c) where the breach concerned unacceptable behaviour on a visit to the school, issue a trespass warning to the parent, which, if the behaviour continues, may accelerate to a trespass notice requiring the parent to stay away from the school unless on the school grounds with the express permission of the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Correspondence that is in breach of this Code of Conduct, because of the language and expression used or the manner in which it is sent or delivered, will not be considered.

Correspondence which is defined as “vexatious” according to the Complaints Policy will not be responded to.

Nothing in this Policy precludes any person from exercising their individual legal rights in respect of obtaining restraining and intervention orders, reporting assault, bringing action for defamation, exercising rights under vilification or discrimination laws or in any other way.